

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
November 28, 2005

Committee Members Present: Russ Brubaker, Don Harper, Joyce Moty, Jeff Hou, Cheryl Klinker, Alec Stephens, Neal Adams, Alan Alabastro, Doug Dunham

Staff: Erin Devoto, Susan Golub, Catherine Anstett, Michael Shiosaki, Korie Voorheis,
Guest Presenters: Peter Lagerwey, Commie Zimmerman from Seattle Department of Transportation

Committee Business: The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes from the October 24, 2005 meeting.

Public Comments: There were none.

Trails Presentation by Peter Lagerwey and Connie Zimmerman

Chief Sealth Trail: Using dirt from Sound Transit excavations allowed significant leveraging of fund, probably saving the project between \$6 and \$10 million. \$400,000 of the cost for the trail is from the Pro Parks Levy. Because of the Sound Transit dirt, we did not have to build retaining walls for the trail. The trail is 85% built, this being accomplished in record time for a Seattle trail project.

The trail travels from Beacon Hill to the Rainier Valley, from south of the Veterans Hospital to Kabota Gardens and is over 3 ½ miles long. It is located on City Light right-of-way. The project started in July 2004 and the earthwork, paving and drainage are almost complete. The trail's terrain is hilly with a 20% slope and more in some locations, and wetland spots in others. Sound Transit supplied 226,000 cubic yards of fill from excavations along Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.

The trail has been well-received by residents along the route, and people are already using it. There are 22 street crossings along the length of the trail providing access points to the trail, and these will be improved by SDOT later this year, with a grand opening of the trail planned for the summer. The long term goal is to connect the Chief Sealth Trail with other trails in the City system.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Ms. Zimmerman noted that the grassy areas along the trail are City light properties and that City Light is responsible for their maintenance. There will be no planting along the trail because it could interfere with City Light's access to the transmission lines that run through the corridor. Responding to another question, Ms. Zimmerman stated that no new parking was being added with the trail development

Responding to a question from Ms. Klinker, Ms. Zimmerman noted that there were not going to be lanes on the trail separating bikes and pedestrians, and that the trail would be similar to the Burke Gilman Trail which functions primarily as a bike facility.

Responding to a question from Mr. Harper, Mr. Lagerwey discussed the issue of electromagnetic power emissions from the power lines. He stated that through extensive research, scientists have concluded that there is no evidence that power lines have a negative impact on health where residents live close to them or from casual use such as a trail.

Mr. Stephens questioned a statement by Mr. Lagerwey that described trails a controversial. Mr. Lagerwey responded that property assemblage to build a trail is often very difficult, involving many landowners. The Burke Gilman Trail is an example where the City had to work with every separate landowner along the trail and that there were a lot of issues with each landowner that had to be worked out. Property owners that hold out and could create gaps in a trail. There is also the issue of trail neighbors' concerns about crime and reduced property values by being near a trail. While these issues have been studied and shown to be false, they remain a concern for trail neighbors.

Lake Union Ship Canal Trail: This has been a difficult project because of multiple property owners. The project will start in the spring and will begin with moving utilities, and moving the railroad tracks to create space for the trail, and then the trail construction will begin. At one location the trail will have to cross the tracks. SDOT will build a top of the line crossing with a gate.

Mountains to Sound Greenway: The Washington State Department of Transportation is the lead for this project. The trail will go through the I-90/I-5 intersection at the Jose Rizal Bridge. The total project cost is \$6 million. In March a decision is expected whether to phase the project in two steps, or wait until all of the funding is available and build in one phase.

Thomas Street Overpass: This project was combined with the Potlach Trail project and will create a connection to Myrtle Edwards Park from Queen Anne and Belltown. Design and cost estimates for the project is complete. Meetings with the community will come next. This project has only one property owner to work with, Martin Selig, and he is in favor of the trail.

Responding to a question from Mr. Harper, Mr. Lagerwey responded that there was no federal funding for this connection.

Burke Gilman Trail: The connection between the locks and 60th opened last summer. The next step, which will take the trail up to Golden Gardens, is currently being designed. The first phase for this park is to improve the intersection at the park entry. The object is to create a major point of entry, and perhaps a monument at the water. This phase is expected to start next spring.

The second phase of the project involves some wetland areas and may require cutting into the slope by the railroad tracks. This will be a more problematic part of the trail to build and will require some additional money.

Responding to a question from Mr. Alabastro, Mr. Lagerwey responded that taking the trail through an industrial area was carefully studied, with 3 alternative routes proposed. The study (available on-line) concluded that the selected route is clearly the best alternative.

Mid-term Levy Report

Dewey Potter, Communications Manager for Parks and Recreation reviewed the draft Mid-term Levy Report and asked for comments on the draft from the Committee. Mr. Dunham responded that he liked the tone – there was consensus among the Committee that the tone of the piece was good.

Ms. Potter reported that the cost for translating the piece into 8 languages would be a minimum of \$10,500. Mr. Stephens asked Ms. Potter to convey a question to Superintendent Bounds regarding the importance of providing translations for the public, and asking how this can be accomplished. Responding to a question from Mr. Brubaker, Ms. Devoto stated that 99% of the money from the Levy is for projects, that there is a very small amount for administration that is separate from projects, acquisition or programming. There is no Levy line item for reports.

Mr. Stephens followed with a question about what the general City policy is regarding translations for City documents. Ms. Potter responded that there is a wide variance among City departments. Ms. Devoto noted that for some Levy-related community meetings translations and translators were provided. Several Committee members spoke about the importance of providing translations of important Levy material. Ms. Potter stated that she would carry the Committee members concerns about translations back to Parks and to others in City government.

Cost Primer

Ms. Devoto handed out a final draft of the cost primer explaining Levy project and acquisition budgets. Committee members Brubaker, Stephens and Alabastro expressed that they were pleased with the document. Mr. Dunham suggested revising the title. Ms. Klinker suggested revised language describing direct v. indirect costs.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.